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**USTR ANNOUNCES RESOLUTION OF
WTO DISPUTE WITH GREECE ON TELEVISION PIRACY**

United States Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick today announced that the United States and Greece have formally resolved their World Trade Organization (WTO) dispute over television piracy. This case concerned the Greek Government's failure to enforce its intellectual property laws effectively against television stations that broadcast U.S. copyrighted works without authorization. The WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (the TRIPS Agreement) requires that countries provide effective enforcement procedures that deter infringement of intellectual property rights.

Since the initiation of this case in April 1998, estimated levels of television piracy in Greece have fallen significantly. Greece also passed new legislation providing for the immediate closure of television stations that infringe upon intellectual property rights. Acting on complaints by U.S. right holders, Greece has taken action under this law to close down several stations that had pirated U.S. films. The first criminal convictions for television piracy have also been issued in Greece, and the Greek Government has formally instructed public prosecutors to ensure the timely prosecution of television piracy cases.

The Greek Government has committed to provide effective deterrence against any increase in the level of television piracy, to continue its efforts in enforcing its intellectual property laws, and to prevent any recurrence of the television piracy problem. The United States looks to Greece to fulfill these commitments and strengthen its efforts to ensure that cases involving infringement of intellectual property rights proceed through the court system without unwarranted delays and that violators are punished by deterrent-level penalties as required under the TRIPS Agreement.

Background

Prior to the initiation of this case, the high rate of television piracy in Greece had been a

contentious bilateral issue between the United States and Greece for years. Notwithstanding the existence of Greek laws prohibiting broadcast piracy, a large number of small and medium-sized local and regional television stations in Greece had regularly broadcast U.S. copyrighted motion pictures and television programs without authorization of the U.S. copyright owners. No television station had ever been held criminally liable for copyright infringement, no station had ever been closed by regulatory authorities for copyright violations, and TV piracy cases languished in the Greek courts for years without resolution. The Motion Picture Association estimated that the rate of TV piracy in Greece was 50%.

The TRIPS Agreement, however, requires WTO Members to provide effective enforcement remedies that “constitute a deterrent to further infringement.”

After the United States invoked WTO dispute settlement procedures, the United States and Greece held several rounds of formal and informal consultations in both Geneva and Athens. Based on the sharp decline in the level of television piracy in Greece over the past years, Greece’s strengthened enforcement efforts, and a commitment by Greece to continue these efforts, the United States, Greece and the European Union today notified the WTO that a mutually satisfactory solution had been reached, thus resolving this dispute.